



U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Washington, D.C. 20535

April 29, 2016

MS. KATIE DREWS  
BETTER GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION  
SUITE 900  
223 WEST JACKSON  
CHICAGO, IL 60606

FOIPA Request No.: 1345756-000  
Subject: DE PRIEST, OSCAR STANTON

Dear Ms. Drews:

In response to your Freedom of Information Acts (FOIA) request submitted to the FBI, enclosed are processed documents responsive to your request.

Material consisting of 10 pages has been reviewed pursuant to Title 5, U.S. Code § 552, and this material is being released to you in its entirety with no excisions being made by the FBI.

For your information, Congress excluded three discrete categories of law enforcement and national security records from the requirements of the FOIA. See 5 U.S.C. § 552(c) (2006 & Supp. IV (2010)). This response is limited to those records that are subject to the requirements of the FOIA. This is a standard notification that is given to all our requesters and should not be taken as an indication that excluded records do, or do not, exist.

For questions regarding our determinations, visit the [www.fbi.gov/foia](http://www.fbi.gov/foia) website under "Contact Us." The FOIPA Request number listed above has been assigned to your request. Please use this number in all correspondence concerning your request. Your patience is appreciated.

You may file an appeal by writing to the Director, Office of Information Policy (OIP), United States Department of Justice, Suite 11050, 1425 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20530-0001, or you may submit an appeal through OIP's FOIAonline portal by creating an account on the following web site: <https://foiaonline.regulations.gov/foia/action/public/home>. Your appeal must be postmarked or electronically transmitted within sixty (60) days from the date of this letter in order to be considered timely. If you submit your appeal by mail, both the letter and the envelope should be clearly marked "Freedom of Information Act Appeal." Please cite the FOIPA Request Number assigned to your request so that it may be easily identified.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Hardy", is written over a white rectangular background.

David M. Hardy  
Section Chief,  
Record/Information  
Dissemination Section  
Records Management Division

Enclosure

# Chicago's Negroes And The War

By WILLIAM L. PATTERSON  
CHICAGO.

**A**LREADY it is unmistakably clear that victory in this war makes no more imperative demand than of unity of the forces fighting for democracy. The strengthening of the solidarity of the United Nations and the development of national unity must be supplemented by the unity of all smaller groupings in the country whether political, economic or cultural. Disunity within such smaller groupings will inevitably disturb the trend toward national unity and weaken the struggle for democracy. It must also, therefore, weaken the efforts such groupings are making to obtain for themselves a greater measure of democracy and consequently greater opportunities for participating in the war against fascism. For no group is this more true than it is for Negro America.

In the struggle for the unity of the Negro people, Chicago bears a large measure of responsibility. Chicago occupies a unique position in our political life. No other city sends a Negro representative to Congress. William L. Dawson, representative for the First Congressional District, is the Congressional spokesman for Negro America. He has the largest forum of any Negro political figure in our country. He, therefore, has great responsibilities of a political and organizational character. Chicago has two Negroes in its city council, one a Republican, Oscar De Priest, the other a Democrat, William H. Harvey. Earl B. Dickerson and Milton F. Webster, two Chicago Negroes are members of the President's Fair Employment Practices Committee, one of the most important of war committees. Robert Taylor, a Negro, is the chairman of the Chicago Housing Authority, and Willard Townsend of Chicago, president of the United Service and Transport Service Workers Union, CIO, is the ranking Negro trade unionist in America, being on the Executive of the CIO. The Illinois Legislature has today more Negro spokesmen than any other legislative body in the country.

## Where the Failings Lie

All of this testifies to the political strength of Negro Chicago and is indicative of the tremendous potentialities this center of the midwest has for giving leadership to the Negro people. It might be well to add that in Ishmael P. Flory, a rising young Negro trade unionist, Chicago has one of the most forthright spokesmen now functioning on the trade union field.

Despite this strength in number and position, Negro Chicago lacks unity. Great individual ability there is among these men but there seems little or no consciousness of their responsibility for forging the unity of their people and less understanding that unity of the Negro people must take the pattern of national unity. There seems to be no appreciation that slavish adherence to partisan politics is out for the duration at least and that the national emergency places victory above all. Partisan politics can now only be destructive of the ends Negro America is seeking to attain—equality of opportunity in the use of this manpower for victory.

The leading Negro political figures of Chicago have not yet learned to elevate the war program to a position of supreme importance and to fit all issues arising out of the political, economic and cultural discrimination

against the Negroes within the orbit of the war. This is the road to victory over Hitler and also victory over Hitlerism.

Nowhere was blind adherence to partisan politics so crudely demonstrated than when William L. Dawson made his initial congressional speech. That speech was in defense of the political integrity of William Pickens who had been attacked by Martin Dies as a radical. True, Dies is a Democrat but he is also a tool of American fascists. Yet Dawson to be a "true Democrat" indulged in red baiting in order to curry favor with Martin Dies. For the Texas poll tax Democrat whose career reveals no evidence of sympathy with democracy, this was a victory; but for Negro unity this was a defeat. Dawson did a disservice to the nation.

## Disunity Hurts The Negro People

On other occasions Dawson has shown a narrow factional attitude against other Negro leaders. He indulged in a vicious factional campaign within his party against Earl B. Dickerson. This campaign brought about the elimination of Earl B. Dickerson from the Chicago City Council in which he had been one of the most progressive forces. It was a victory for one individual but a defeat for Negro unity.

The history of Mr. Dickerson, one of America's ablest Negro leaders, also reflects a strong tendency toward factionalism within his party. This has weakened his

own effectiveness and weakened his value to the Negro people as a whole. It has forced him to seek political alliances—and not all have been with win-the-war forces. It has taken Dickerson out of the camp of Mayor Kelly who is an able supporter of the President's war program. Dickerson has not been able to see that those who today adhere closest to the President's program of victory over fascism are making the greatest contribution in the struggle against Hitlerism here at home. Objectively these people are the friends of Negro America even when not consciously such. Dickerson's campaign against a win-the-war Democrat could only confuse the Negro people of Chicago.

The campaigns of Oscar De Priest for Republican candidate for city council and that of William H. Harvey were also marked by their violent partisan character. De Priest is adhering to the anti-war program of the G. O. P. Green-Senator Brooks-McCormick bloc, than which there is no more menacing force for the Negro people in America.

100-133-A  
This is a clipping from  
Page 16 Sec 2 of  
THE WORKER  
Date May 2, 1943  
Clipped at the seat of  
Government

FILE  
8-31-49 BY 2602 NPM/ka

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INDEXING

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DECEMBER 15 1943

60 MAY 11 1943

Willard Townsend, the ranking Negro CIO leader is rapidly falling under the complete dominance of Trotskyites, social democratic elements and as well is being influenced by certain clerical fascist forces. The recent attacks of this labor leader upon the Communists are reminiscent of those attacks which split the unity of France and brought about its inevitable defeat. Reading Townsend one could only think of Goebbels. This man's attack upon Communism has been equalled in its viciousness nowhere save in the tirades of Martin Dies, the Klan representative.

Mr. Townsend in inconsistently following such a course is not only driving a Hitler-like wedge at the most consistent and persistent friends of the Negroes in American political life, he is also doing grave injury to national unity and to the unity of his own people.

A number of leading Chicago churchmen are also coming forward on the political front. One of the leading ministers working with the National Negro Council headed by the careerist, Edgar G. Brown, has called Senator Langer, Republican of North Dakota, to speak in his church. There has been a complete failure to recognize that Langer, who in words expresses a sympathy for Negro America, is in deeds following the line of the poll tax congressmen and other fascist-minded elements in Congress.

None of these men seem clearly to understand that were they to agree upon a win-the-war pro-

gram, this would be the greatest contribution that could be made to the fight Negro America is making for equality of opportunity. There is for them a basis for unity around a program that offers each an opportunity for personal prestige and material advantages. It is the program of victory over Hitler.

### Changes Needed In Outlooks

These men have, however, adhered to a politics-as-usual program, by remaining representatives of the school of political thought which they insistently miscall "practical politics." This practical politics reflects itself in practice in an "each-for-himself and the devil take the hindmost" attitude. While the making of an advantageous deal behind the scenes may appear as a shorter cut to "power" than rallying the people around a program of struggle for political principles, the history of our country particularly as reflected in the life of Frederick Douglass is proof to the contrary.

Discussion of the honesty of these men has no place in such an article as this. Regardless of how sincere they may be, the objective result of their individual tactics has been to weaken and dissipate the political strength of Negro Chicago at this historic moment. Practical politics is based upon principle. Within this struggle for principle, great flexibility is possible. Around a minimum unity program which places the winning of the war above partisanship, the Negro political leadership of Chicago can give great aid and comfort to the struggle for national unity and against the home grown fascist Klan elements. But a change in the outlook of these in the main, splendid individuals will have to be effected.

### A Program For Unity

In the midst of this political disunity, the Communist Party has been diligently seeking to put through a program of unity of the Negro people and their integration into the whole war effort. Its influence among most of the leaders mentioned is strong but not yet sufficiently strong to bring them together. There is need for those Party

representatives in the trade union field and on the political front to make still more strenuous efforts to bring the other political forces among Negroes in Chicago to see that in unity of the Negro people rising around the war program lie the possibilities for a solution of their problems here at home.

The program of unity includes (a) the struggle for the passage of an Anti-Poll Tax Bill and an anti-lynching law, (b) the strengthening of the President's Fair Employment Practices Committee, and (c) a mixed division in the Army, (d) the elimination of the peonage and sharecropping system from war economy, and (e) the ending of discriminating practices in all phases of American life.

But this program cannot succeed if approached on a partisan basis.

Too many currents are exhausting the political energies of the Negro people when if canalized in the main war stream they can be a great asset in defeating Hitler and Hitlerism. It is hardly likely that the experiences of Chicago are unique. The lessons that can be learned through a study of the struggle for unity there can be helpful in every large city.

# 'I Go Into the Army May 8th'

## Pete Clarke Tells of His Life

By Peter Clarke

I'm 22 and I was born in Worcester, Mass. I always had a desire to travel and see the United States and my first trip as I can recall it I went with some white boys from Worcester to Belle Glade, Florida. I was 11 at the time—to work in the food groves for the A. F. G.

We beat our way down on freights. My mother worked in a laundry in Worcester and I don't remember my father. We didn't live on easy street. I just slipped off with these fellows—they were Italians. I learned how to spell and read and write mostly by myself traveling on the road. I like to read. I worked in the food groves from sun-up to sun-down for about eight months. . . . After that I went back to my mother in Worcester, Mass., but things weren't a bit better than they had been. But I stayed with my mother.

After my mother died I left Worcester and went back down South to Georgia to my grandmother in a little country town. I worked there on a farm, hoeing cotton, and breaking corn for a farmer. I stayed there for a year. During the time I was there that was the time I got in trouble—the first time.

### RETURN NORTH

We got paid off at the farm on Saturday and then a bunch of fellows would hop a freight to Louisville, a Georgia town of about 3,000 people where we could have some fun. When we got ready to come back to Millin and walked back into the train yard, I was alone and got picked up for hoboeing. I told them I was working in Millin but it didn't do any good even though they knew the man I was working for. I had a trial, though I stayed in jail one month waiting for the trial. I was sentenced to six months and served the sentence. I worked on what they called then the chain gang, building roads. Sometimes they picked up men just so they'll have them to work for nothing on the road. At leastways that's what I understand.

As soon as I got out by hopping a freight up North to Philadelphia. I had relatives here but I didn't know it then. I had an uncle in New York who gave the address of my aunt here. Most of the time I lived with my aunt. About last year I started to write the story of my life and I wrote about 14,000 words on it, most as a warning to other fellows.

I was arrested for stealing coal one winter when it was cold and I didn't have a job and I was given a suspended sentence. The next time I was arrested for breaking in a house. It was the house I lived in and I wanted to get my clothes out. I was given 20 days that time though I was acquitted because I didn't have a criminal registration card with me. Nobody ever told me anything about a criminal registra-

Peter Clarke, 22-year-old Negro, was arrested on Friday night, March 12th, while on the way to work, on a fake "purse-snatching" charge. When this charge could not be sustained, he was sentenced to three months in Holmesburg prison, as "an idle and disorderly person."

As a result of letters written by his family to The Worker and to the Communist Party, the facts about this case were exposed in The Worker, and a campaign of protest and mass meetings, initiated by the Communist Party, won wide support.

After 35 days in jail, plus seven days waiting for his hearing, Mr. Clarke was released by Judge Flood, April 21, on a writ of habeas corpus, filed by Philip Dorfman, civil liberties attorney.

Mr. Clarke proudly carried with him as he walked out of court an order to report to the Army on May 8th, and a letter which Judge Flood had received from his Selective Service Board, confirming Clarke's claim that he had volunteered, but could not get into uniform on account of the sentence that kept him in jail.

tion card. All the other times I was arrested it was for hoboeing but it all added up on my record so that the record said I had 20 arrests against me but I figure the only real arrest was that time for stealing the coal when it was cold.

Once I went down to St. Petersburg, Florida, to work but I got the wrong train and was picked up in Tampa, Florida, and arrested for hoboeing and sentenced to three months, building roads free.

### AUNT ALICE HOWARD

I got along fine with my aunt and my cousin. My Aunt Alice Howard is the one who wrote to The Worker about me and which got me free.

My cousin Rebecca and my aunt think I'm all right and didn't get the breaks. Now I'm going into the Army and I hear the hardest thing there is to take orders. But I'll do it. I know and get along good. The way I feel about things now is that I would still be in jail if it hadn't been for The Worker who came forward to help me. I'll try to show how much I appreciate their help by making good. I want to help win the war and do whatever I can to get rid of the dictators in the world. I go into the Army on May 8. I volunteered in March and then I was picked up on the charge of loitering with intent to steal a woman's pocketbook. There was no evidence against me and I was serving a 90-day sentence when my aunt wrote to The Worker and the Communist Party and they helped to free me after serving 35 days.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 8-31-79 BY 6002 WMP/KSR

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This is a clipping from page 5 Sec. 1 of

THE WORKER

Date May 2, 1943

Clipped at the seat of Governor

53 MAY 10 1943



48-944-1

JIT:AMZ

March 6, 1930.

RECORDED & INDEXED

MAR 7 1930

Mr. W. R. Spilman,  
Chief Post Office Inspector,  
Post Office Department,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

There is attached hereto for your information and for such action as, in your discretion, may be deemed appropriate, a letter dated March 3, 1930, at Washington, D. C., and the envelope in which it was mailed to Congressman Priest of Illinois. The correspondent has been advised of this reference.

Very truly yours,

Director.

Incl. #642698.

48-944-1



48-944-1

RECORDED

MAR 7 1930

JJW:AMP

March 6, 1930.

Honorable Oscar DePriest,  
House of Representatives,  
Washington, D. C.

My dear Congressman:

Receipt is acknowledged of your letter of March 3, 1930, with which was attached a communication, dated March 2, 1930, and the envelope in which it was mailed, containing remarks of a threatening nature.

Inasmuch as this matter is one coming within the jurisdiction of the postal authorities, I have taken the liberty of forwarding your communication to the Chief Post Office Inspector.

Very truly yours,

Director.



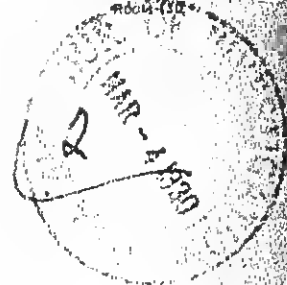
OSCAR DE PRIEST  
1ST DISTRICT

COMMITTEES:  
INDIAN AFFAIRS  
INVALID PENSIONS  
ENROLLED BILLS

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D. C.

MORRIS LEWIS  
SECRETARY

OFFICE  
HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
ROOM 412



March 3, 1930.

Hon. Edgar Hoover,  
Director,  
Bureau of Investigation,  
Department of Justice,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:-

Enclosed please find letter which was  
received by me this morning. Any con-  
sideration or investigation given this  
matter will be appreciated by me.

Respectfully yours,

*Oscar de Priest*

C/ODP

RECORDED

1 encl.

MAR 7 1930



MAR 4 1930

48-944-1

MAR 7 1930

THU 7 1930

*File in Priest  
Long  
File in Priest  
Mar 3/6/30*

*MAJ*



LET'S GO  
CITIZENS' MILITARY  
TRAINING CAMPS

Mr. Joe Stevens  
Post Office



6 AV

Memphis  
Tennessee





Mr. Oscar De Priest.

419 1/2 West 77th St.

London

Wash. D.C.

March 2/1930

Mr. Dr. Rust I am warning  
you to keep your damn  
silence out of your papers  
about us. Or we will take  
action. You are getting to be  
to damn smart meddling  
in our affairs. If there's  
any more remarks about  
Jim Crow which you and  
your people ~~throw~~  
you better leave this  
town right away.

